NOMINATION OF THOMAS E. COOPER TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE (RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND LOGISTICS)

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
UNITED STATES SENATE

NINETY-SEVENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

ON

NOMINATION OF

THOMAS E. COOPER TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE (RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND LOGISTICS)

DECEMBER 16, 1982

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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1982

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, D.C.

The committee met, pursuant to recess, at 12:25 p.m., in room 1318, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Senator John Tower (chairman) presiding.

Present: Senators Tower, Warner, and Nunn.

Staff present: James McGovern, staff director and chief counsel; Christine C. Dauth, chief clerk; José E. Martinez, professional staff member; Mary A. Shields, research assistant; and Tamara L. Farnsworth, staff assistant.

Also present: John Campbell, assistant to Senator Warner; Jon Etherton, assistant to Senator Jepsen; Hank Steenstra, assistant to Senator Quayle; and Arnold Punaro, assistant to Senator Nunn.

OPENING STATEMENT BY SENATOR JOHN TOWER, CHAIRMAN

Chairman TOWER. The committee will come to order, please, as we turn now to the consideration of Dr. Thomas E. Cooper, who has been nominated by the President to be Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Research, Development and Logistics.

Dr. Cooper, would you come to the table?

We are pleased to welcome this morning Dr. Thomas E. Cooper. We will include his nomination reference and biographical sketch in the record.

[The nomination reference and biographical sketch follow:]

NOMINATION REFERENCE

AS IN EXECUTIVE SESSION,
SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES,
December 15, 1982.

Ordered, that the following nomination be referred to the Committee on Armed Services:

Thomas Edward Cooper, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Air Force, vice Alton Gold Keel, Jr., resigned.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THOMAS E. COOPER

Thomas E. Cooper was born on May 31, 1943, in Lindsay, California. During the period 1961–1970, he attended the University of California at Berkeley where he obtained a Bachelor's Degree in Engineering-Mathematics (Cum Laude), and a Master's Degree and Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering.

Following graduation, Dr. Cooper was employed as an acting Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineering at the University of California, Berkeley, from 1970 to 1971. In 1971, he joined the faculty of the Mechanical Engineering Department at the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California. He was promoted to Associate Professor in 1974 and awarded academic tenure in 1975. In 1975, he was awarded the school's John Schefflein medallion for excellence in teaching.

Dr. Cooper was chosen to be a Congressional Science Fellow during 1976 and spent the year serving on the professional staff of the Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives. Following his Fellowship year, Dr. Cooper was appointed as a professional staff member on the Armed Services Committee.

In addition to his academic career, Dr. Cooper has also worked for Proctor and Gamble Corporation, Aerojet General Corporation, and the California State Division of Highways. He has also served as an engineering consultant to the Lawrence Radiation Laboratory, Livermore, California; the Naval Weapons Center, China Lake, California; and the Naval Weapons Laboratory, Dahlgren, Virginia.

Dr. Cooper is a member of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, the American Society of Engineering Educators, Sigma XI, the North American Research Society, and Tau Beta Pi. In 1975, he was chosen as one of the "Outstanding Young Men in America." He is also listed in American Men of Science and Who's Who in the West.

Dr. Cooper and his wife, Helen, have one daughter, Nicole, age 10.

Chairman TOWER. Dr. Cooper is eminently qualified and well known to all of us who served on conference committees with the House, for the very fine work that he has done as a member of the staff of the Armed Services Committee. I will file the remainder of my statement for the record, and recognize the distinguished ranking member of the Armed Services Committee of the House of Representatives, Congressman William Dickinson.

[The prepared statement of Chairman John Tower follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR JOHN TOWER

We are pleased to welcome this morning Dr. Thomas E. Cooper, who was nominated yesterday by President Reagan to be Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Research, Development and Logistics. Dr. Cooper, we will include your nomination reference and biographical sketch in the record of the hearing.

Dr. Cooper holds a Ph. D. in Mechanical Engineering which he earned from the University of California at Berkeley. He was later a faculty member at that University and at the Naval Postgraduate School.

In 1976 Dr. Cooper was selected to be a Congressional Science Fellow, and has served for the last six years on the professional staff of the Armed Services Committee of the House of Representatives.

Dr. Cooper is a member of various professional societies, and was selected in 1975 as an Outstanding Young Man of America.

The staff of the Committee has met with Dr. Cooper to review his financial holdings and to ensure that such holdings will not create any conflict of interest or appearance thereof.

STATEMENT OF HON. WILLIAM DICKINSON, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF ALABAMA

Representative DICKINSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the opportunity. I am very proud to be asked to come and present Tom to the committee, all of whom know Tom.

I have very mixed feelings here this morning. I am very proud of Tom. He came to our committee in 1976 as a congressional fellow after having earned his Ph. D. and having taught. He was sort of a

"Jack Armstrong, All-American boy." He was nominated and designated an All-American baseball player at the University of California at Berkeley.

He went on to teach at the University of California and then at the Naval Postgraduate School. He was selected as the Outstanding Teacher of the Year during his teaching stint. Then he came to us as a congressional fellow. He only intended to stay for a year. However, he was so impressive that we asked him to extend a year, which he did, at which time we asked him to stay on permanently, which he did.

He and Tony Battista are the only two professional staff people on the R&D Subcommittee that handles everything that comes through our committee. I think if we lost them both, it would probably take six to take their place.

He is very competent, very deep in his technical background and very unassuming. But in recommending him to you, I do so with a sense of loss for me because I have got to find somebody to take his place. And I do not know how to do that. But I cannot think of a more competent fellow that would do a better job for the Air Force, for the Government, as will Tom. I know that each of you has had dealings with him as has your staff and you know of his competence, his excellence, his unassuming steady way, and his ability to meet crisis situations as they occur.

So I am very pleased and proud to recommend him to you and have this opportunity to present him. I would also like to submit for the record a brief statement summarizing the areas of responsibility Tom has had during his tenure on the staff of the Armed Services Committee.

[Prepared statement of Hon. William L. Dickinson follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. WILLIAM L. DICKINSON

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I would like to take this opportunity to outline some of the areas Dr. Cooper has had responsibility for during his seven years as a professional staff member on the Armed Services Committee.

Dr. Cooper attended the University of California at Berkeley where he obtained a Bachelor's degree in engineering-mathematics (Cum Laude), and a Master's degree and Ph. D. in mechanical engineering.

He came to the Armed Services Committee on a one-year congressional fellowship from the American Society of Mechanical Engineers while he was an associate professor of Mechanical Engineering at the Naval Postgraduate School. Because his work was so outstanding, he was asked to extend for another year, after which he was asked to stay permanently on the staff.

During his time on the committee, Dr. Cooper has worked on a wide range of research and development authorization, dealing with both strategic and tactical programs, and with all areas of basic and applied research funded through the Department of Defense. In addition, he has handled intelligence-related military programs and has been the committee's liaison at the staff level with the House Intelligence Committee. As a corollary duty, he has also had responsibility for space and satellite activities as well as command, control and communications issues.

In addition, Dr. Cooper served as the principal staff assistant to the Industrial Base Panel of the Armed Services Committee which did some of the initial important work in pointing out the fundamental problems in the U.S. industrial base. Dr. Cooper had a major role in drafting the basic report of the panel and assisted in drafting legislation relating to the use of multiyear contracting.

As a representative of the committee, he has spoken widely at symposia and other forums on the weapons system acquisition process and the congressional role in that process.

Dr. Cooper has been one of our key staff members. We are going to miss him but our loss is surely the Air Force's gain.

Chairman TOWER. Thank you, Congressman.

Dr. Cooper, we would like to hear from you any statement you choose to make or you may want to file a statement for the record or summarize it. You may proceed as you see fit.

STATEMENT OF THOMAS E. COOPER OF VIRGINIA, NOMINEE

Dr. COOPER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First I want to thank you for making room for me on your schedule today. This has all happened very quickly, and I do not have a prepared statement.

Mr. Chairman, while you were out of the room voting a few minutes ago, Admiral Holloway and General Jones opined as how there were already too many assistant secretaries in the Defense Department, and I had a vision flash before my eyes while I was sitting out in the audience. It was that tomorrow I would wake up and you would indeed confirm me, but on the other hand you would then abolish the position. [Laughter.]

Mr. Dickinson, I do want to thank you very much for your generous remarks.

I would like to make just three very brief comments. First of all, I am happy to be here. It is a proud occasion for me. I cannot imagine anybody that has got an ounce of emotion not being flattered to have a Presidential nomination. I will do my best to make sure that that trust is well placed.

After listening to the gentlemen who preceded me, I must say I have no "Cooper Initiatives" to offer this morning that will cure all the ills of the Defense Department overnight. I think the best thing for me to do is just to roll up my sleeves and go to work and do the best that I can.

I am reminded of the story of the fellow who was at the cocktail party and was offered an oyster, his first oyster, and he accepted it. When the hostess came back and offered him another, he said, "I don't know what to do with the one I've got." [Laughter.]

That is the position I am in right now. I have my hands full doing my current job, and I will continue to do that until I am confirmed. And then I will move over to the Pentagon.

The final thing I wanted to say, Mr. Chairman, is that it has been a real privilege and, in fact, an honor for me to serve the Congress. I have enjoyed working on the House Armed Services Committee. I believe what the Armed Services Committees do is among the most important things done by the Congress.

I have also enjoyed working with the Senate Armed Services Committee in the conferences. While we have had differences of opinion at times on issues, I think both committees have always tried to do the same thing, and that is to provide the best defense at the least possible cost. I look forward to maintaining the working relationship that we have had, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you again for your consideration this morning. I know it is a very busy time.

Chairman TOWER. Thank you, Tom.

Now that we have you here, are you sorry for the way you roughed us up in conference? [Laughter.]

Dr. COOPER. I think I may be shortly. [Laughter.]

Chairman TOWER. Senator Nunn?

Senator NUNN. Mr. Chairman, I think this is an excellent nomination. I have known Dr. Cooper for some time. We worked with him, as you mentioned earlier, in conference. And he comes highly recommended. He has tremendous qualifications. I think he will be a real asset to both the executive branch and the Department of Defense. Besides that, we need someone in the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Air Force that can interpret the actions of the House Armed Services Committee which, from time to time, need interpretation.

But I am also pleased to have Mr. Dickinson here, who is an outstanding member of the House Armed Services Committee. I suggest that we do everything possible to help the chairman to expedite this nomination.

Chairman TOWER. Senator Warner?

Senator WARNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The nominee states as his residence the Commonwealth of Virginia. Therefore, I take considerable interest in his nomination. I join with Mr. Dickinson, yourself, and Mr. Nunn in congratulating him on his nomination. I have worked with the nominee now for about 4 years.

I admire you as a professional. I think it is wonderful to see a person that has worked so hard come up through the ranks, so to speak, and gain the recognition which you have through your professional ability.

You come to the Department of the Air Force at a time when they are very much in need of the type of objective, in-depth analysis that you can provide—you know exactly what I mean—in the strategic systems.

I look forward to working with you. And you have my support.

Dr. COOPER. Thank you, sir.

Chairman TOWER. I think this is a fine nomination. I think we should recognize the fact that Tom's wife Helen is here today.

Helen, would you stand? We are delighted to have you.

The Chair is prepared to entertain a motion that the nomination be favorably reported.

Senator NUNN. So moved, Mr. Chairman.

Senator WARNER. Second.

Chairman TOWER. Is there objection? The nomination will be favorably reported. Absent members will have until 5 p.m. to be polled on this nomination.

We have certain routine nominations before the committee that have been before the committee for the requisite period of time. Is there objection to their being favorably reported?

[No response.]

Chairman TOWER. Without objection the nominations will be reported.

I will ask Senator Warner to report the action of the committee on Dr. Cooper.

Dr. Cooper, congratulations, and we look forward to working with you.

The committee is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:35 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

[The nomination Thomas E. Cooper was reported to the Senate by Senator Warner on December 16, 1982, with the recommendation that the nomination be confirmed. The nomination was confirmed on December 21, 1982.]

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